

Motorcycle Helmets—Good for Montana

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Data Montana Fatalities by County 2005

Motorcycle Fatalities 2005			
Rank	County	#	Rate/100,000
1	Flathead	5	6.01
2	Madison	3	41.24
3	Carbon	2	20.20
4	Lewis & Clark	2	3.42
5	Park	2	12.53
6	Powell	2	28.58
7	Yellowstone	2	1.46
8	Cascade	1	1.26
9	Custer	1	8.88
10	Fergus	1	8.66

Rank by Rate Motorcycle Fatalities 2005			
Median Rate for all US Counties: 2.85			
Rank	County	Fatalities	Rate/100,000
1	Madison	3	41.24
2	Granite	1	33.73
3	Powell	2	28.58
4	Mineral	1	24.91
5	Carbon	2	20.20
6	Park	2	12.53
7	Sanders	1	9.04
8	Custer	1	8.88
9	Fergus	1	8.66
10	Glacier	1	7.38

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Motorcycle Crash Data—MT State Trauma Registry:

(January 1, 2003—September 30, 2006)

- ♦ 573 patients were seen in hospitals due to motorcycle crashes
 - 2003 – 110 people
 - 2004 – 128 people
 - 2005 – 168 people
 - 2006 – 167 people (Jan.—Sept. 30, 2006)
- ♦ 55% of people were unhelmeted, 40% used helmets, 4% unknown usage
- ♦ The number of patients seen from motorcycle crashes have increased over 53% since 2003.
- ♦ Of the 573 patients involved in motorcycle crashes, 84% (483) were men and 16% (90) were women.
- ♦ The average age of an injured rider was 41 years old. The age distribution is as follows:
 - 0 – 14 - 9 (2%)
 - 15 – 24 - 106 (18%)
 - 25 – 39 - 139 (24%)
 - 40 – 54 - 210 (37%)
 - 55 – 69 - 103 (18%)
 - 70 – 84 - 6 (1%)
- ♦ Of the 573 people involved in motorcycle crashes, emergency department disposition is as follows:

• Transferred to higher level of care	39
• Admitted to Intensive Care Unit	133
• Taken to the Operating Room	136
• Admitted to the floor	165
• Died	10
• Discharged home	90
- ♦ Nearly 1/3 of people ultimately discharged from a hospital had injuries significant enough to be transferred to a facility with advanced resources, i.e. a rehabilitation or skilled nursing facility, or they died.
- ♦ Head/brain injuries—minor, moderate, severe
 - Minor to moderate injuries includes no loss of consciousness or loss of consciousness that returned to normal before hospital discharge
 - Severe injury includes loss of consciousness that did not return to normal before hospital discharge
- ♦ 40% of riders in crashes sustained a head/brain injury (mild, moderate, or severe), 70% of them were not wearing a helmet
- ♦ 164 riders sustained a minor to moderate head/brain injury and 112 (68%) of them were not wearing helmets
- ♦ 47 riders sustained a severe head/brain injury and 35 (74%) were unhelmeted
- ♦ In 2005, there was a 51% increase in MT motorcycle registration. *Department of Highway Traffic Safety Annual Report 2006*

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National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Data:



- ♦ Per mile traveled in 2003, a motorcyclist is 32 times more likely to die in a crash than someone riding in an automobile
- ♦ In 2005, 4,553 motorcyclists were killed and an additional 87,000 were injured in crashes - 13% more fatalities than in 2004 and 14% more injuries than in 2004
- ♦ Motorcycle fatalities have increased by over 100% since 1997
- ♦ Head injury is the leading cause of death in motorcycle crashes
- ♦ NHSTA estimates that helmets reduce the likelihood of a crash fatality by 37%
- ♦ Average hospital charge for motorcyclists suffering serious head injuries is \$43,214. Those with mild or no head injuries incurred an average cost of \$15,528
- ♦ NHSTA estimates that helmet use saved \$1.3 billion in 2002 and an additional \$853 million would have been saved if all motorcyclists involved in fatal crashes would have worn helmets
- ♦ NHSTA estimates that helmet usage saved \$19.5 billion in economic costs from 1984 – 2002. An additional \$14.8 billion would have been saved if all motorcyclists had worn helmets during the same time period.
- ♦ Crash Outcome Data Evaluation System (CODES) study found that helmets are 67% effective in preventing brain injury
- ♦ CODES study found that unhelmeted motorcyclists involved in crashes were 3 times more likely to suffer brain injuries than those wearing helmets
- ♦ A study of 3,600 traffic crash reports covering motorcycles conducted at the University of Southern California found that **wearing a helmet was the single most important factor in surviving a motorcycle crash**
- ♦ Helmet laws that govern only minors are extremely difficult to enforce
- ♦ Comprehensive motorcycle safety program should include helmet usage, rider education, operator licensing and responsible use of alcohol

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From: ScibekJC@msc.umt.edu

To:  nancron@aol.com, vroom65@juno.com, kokoprod@cyberport.net,  Vulcanjunkie@aol.com, johnnorna@yahoo.com, sandykoeck@juno.com [Show 25 more](#)

Subject: HB 534 Mandatory Helmet Bill

Date: Sun, 11 Feb 2007 9:09 PM

At a time when highway fatalities have been decreasing, motorcycle fatalities have continued to increase," said Forum Chair, Deborah Hersman.

There has been a 115% increase in the number of motorcycle fatalities in the last eight years, with the 40+ age group representing the largest number of deaths. Half of these fatalities are single vehicle accidents that occur on rural roadways.

The increase in the number of deaths was also attributed to the increase in riders who do not wear helmets. Of the 4553 riders who died in accidents in the last year, almost half were not wearing a helmet and in the 30 states that do not require a helmet, about two-thirds of fatally injured riders were not wearing a helmet.

David Thom, best known for his work on the Hurt Report, advised that riders who don't wear helmets are three times more likely to be killed if involved in an accident. He also went on to say that there is no basis in fact for the belief that helmets reduce peripheral vision, cause neck injuries or create hearing problems."

John Scibek

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<p>From: ScibekJC@msu.umt.edu</p> <p>To:  nancron@aol.com</p> <p>Subject: HB534</p> <p>Date: Thu, 8 Feb 2007 9:19 AM</p>										
<p>Ron, as a motorcycle rider of nearly 13 years, I would like to register my support for HB534, Motorcycle Helmet Law.</p> <p>Many of my fellow riders are being pressured to oppose this bill on the basis of the removal of our "freedoms." I am not in that camp. If the freedom to ride my '07 BMW was being impinged upon, you know that I would rise up in my loudest voice. I, and nearly all of my fellow riders in the MT BMW Club, wear helmets and this legislation would not compromise our freedom to ride.</p> <p>Far too many fatal motorcycles in Montana come with newspaper headlines stating, "The rider was not wearing a helmet." While helmets will certainly not prevent fatalities in all motorcycle accidents, the long-term health of a growing number of riders, the reputation of the motorcycle industry, and motorcycle insurance rates would all likely benefit from a mandatory helmet law.</p> <p>Thank you for your attention.</p> <p>John C. Scibek 5108 Village View Way, #1 Missoula, MT 59803 (406) 721-4647</p>										

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From: JohnTaylor@geico.com
To:  NANCRON@AOL.COM
Subject: GEICO's Position on HB-534 (Motorcycle Helmets)
Date: Tue, 13 Feb 2007 12:58 PM

I am writing on behalf of the GEICO group of companies ("GEICO"), the nation's fourth largest private passenger automobile insurer, and the twelfth largest in Montana, to express GEICO's support for HB-534, which you have sponsored to expand Montana's motorcycle helmet law.

GEICO firmly believes in the importance of universal motorcycle helmet use and commends your efforts on this issue.

In reviewing Montana's existing laws, I noted that MCA 61-9-417 currently requires helmet use by minors. That statute has a significant provision not present in HB-534 regarding the requirement that the headgear meet certain qualitative standards. GEICO believes this additional provision is significant to prevent the use of "novelty" helmets which provide little or no real protection and evade the intent of the law.

I am unclear whether the department of justice has promulgated the standards contemplated by the statute. An alternative would be to reference DOT or SNELL (<http://www.smf.org>) approval – which are the two leading national standards. A description and comparison of these standards may be found at: <http://www.mmsp.org/helmets/snell.htm>

I respectfully submit the following substitute language, which I believe would meet your goals while incorporating the change into the existing statute and thus avoiding confusion and overlap:



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PROGRAM RELIABILITY HAS VALUE

Rep. Ron Erickson
House of Representatives
Capitol Building
Helena, Mt.

Madame Chair and members of the House Judiciary Committee,

For the record my name is George Lane, you know me as the guy with the camera.

I have been riding motorcycles for coming up on 50 years. I was born into a motorcycling family, one of the first photographs of my father and I is of him holding me on the tank of his 1937 Indian Chief. At the insistence of my wife I started wearing a helmet over 10 years ago. Yes, I was once one of the many who let his hair blow in the wind and I have heard the many reasons for not wearing a helmet. It is too hot in the summer, I can't hear the traffic, and it gives me helmet hair. BUNK!!! I have also seen the tragedy of not wearing one, both personally and professionally.

I do find it interesting that people will spend 10 to 20 thousand dollars for a bike, then pour even more money into accessories for their bike. They will spend several hundreds of dollars for leather boots, chaps, vests, jackets and gloves, but won't spend \$100 dollars for the one item that will protect, that which allows them to ride in the first place, their brain.

I am one of those who dislikes it when the government tells me what to do and when to do it. But with age comes wisdom. I now feel it is the time for all riders to start wearing a helmet, especially those who are just starting to ride. I see far too many young riders who have not learned the proper expertise in the handling of a motorcycle, but that is for another bill. The addition of having to wear a properly approved helmet will hopefully save a young life or even an old codger like me.

I have spoken with Rep. Erickson and have asked him to put in an amendment. In section 1, subsection 6, where it reads 'shall wear a properly attached motorcycle helmet at all times', to change the wording to 'shall wear a properly attached DOT and/or Snell approved motorcycle helmet'.

If this amendment were to be added I would give my full support to the bill.

For my fellow riders I would say; you don't have to agree with me, but respect my opinions. For I hope to see all of you on the road for many years to come.

I will leave you with two sayings that I live by, "Never be in a hurry to get to the accident" and "Better cowhide than my hide".

Respectfully,


George Lane